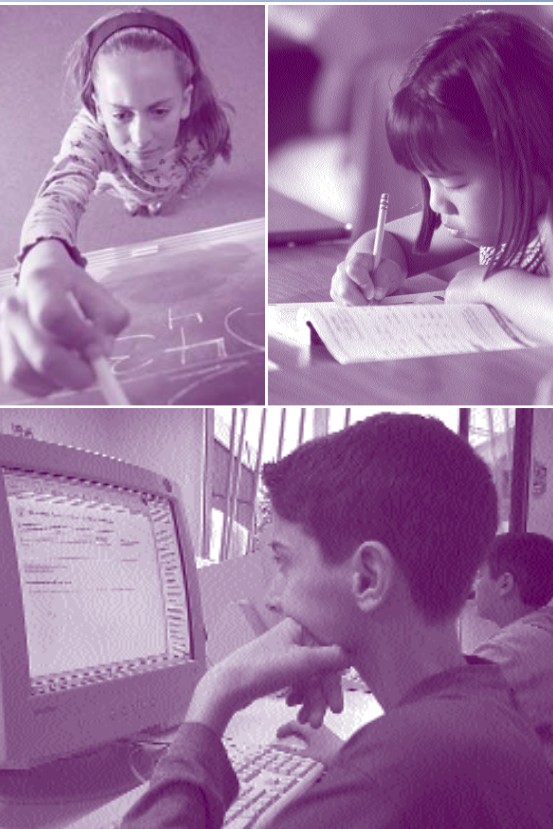


State Representative **Bob Bischoff**



Session Report



- ☒ The New State Budget
- ☒ Agricultural Development
- ☒ Protection of Riverboat Revenue
- ☒ Fighting Meth

INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET



School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for schools will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

"I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget."

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by five percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.

Protecting Riverboat Revenue

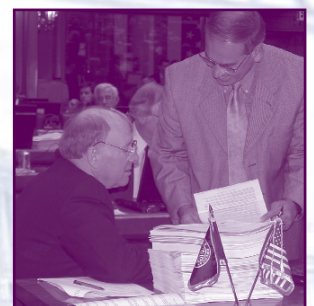
The big story for southeast Indiana this session was the threat to local riverboat revenues.

Proposals were offered during the past legislative session which would have taken more than \$120 million away from the counties across Indiana that receive direct support from riverboats, such as Dearborn, Ohio and Switzerland counties.

Too many people saw that revenue as an easy source of money to shore up the budget. Regardless of budget constraints, I disagreed with all attempts to try to balance this budget on the backs of a select few counties in Indiana and worked hard all session to see that these proposals were not enacted.

Losing local riverboat money would have been devastating for local communities who count on that income for infrastructure, civic programs, enhancement projects for schools and for local foundations that channel that money back toward improving the area.

In the end, we were able to protect counties in southern Indiana from losing that vital source of revenue.



Rep. Bischoff talks with Rep. Paul Robertson (D-Corydon) about legislation.

Making Strides for Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to **create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs** in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development a priority.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

One initiative that I spent a great deal of time on this session was the **creation of the Indiana Department of Agriculture and Office of Rural Affairs**.

I co-authored the legislation that makes this body a cabinet-level entity which will provide administrative and staff support for various agriculture-related councils that are responsible for ensuring the produce, dairy and meat products on our grocery stores' shelves are of high quality.

The Office of Rural Development will control funding for research contributing to the development of the state's farming techniques. **These are among the most aggressive steps taken in recent years to improve Indiana's agricultural industry.**

Another important bill that was passed into law this session created a new public-private entity—the Indiana Economic Development Corporation—to serve as the leader for development efforts across our state.



ECONOMIC TOOLS

Other measures passed this session will extend the deadline for property tax abatements and TIF districts, codify the Research and Development Sales Tax

Exemption/Credit, and **give additional tax breaks to small business owners** to reduce the potential that they will be harmed by government regulation.

Senate Bill 1 also allows the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to designate up to three areas as Global Commerce Centers to promote job growth and employment.

SPURRING NEW GROWTH

Much of the economic development language that passed was aimed at **drawing in new businesses to support job growth**. One of those measures will speed up the process of preparing sites for development, making them “shovel-ready.”

Another bill establishes a Headquarters Relocation Credit to entice corporations to move their operations to Indiana.



Dearborn County Superior Court

Dearborn County will have a new superior court, thanks to legislation that was authored by Rep. Bischoff. Both the civil and criminal dockets in Dearborn County are severely backlogged and the area has been dealing with a judicial shortage for years. This new court will be extremely beneficial in dealing with those problems.



School Pledge

Legislation was passed this session which will require a daily opportunity for students to voluntarily say the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a moment of silence in each public school classroom. The bill also states that each classroom must have a United States flag on display.

Alternate Fuels

Whenver possible, state government vehicles will be required to run on agriculture-based fuels, such as biodiesel, ethanol or gasohol.

Protecting Firefighters

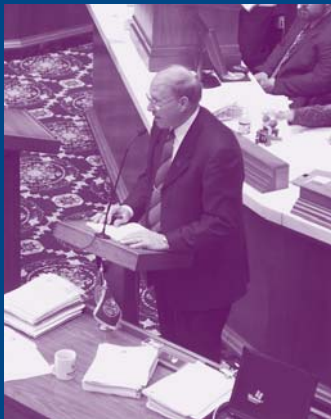


Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians will not be penalized by their employers for being absent when they are responding to emergency calls.

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New Laws Address Production of Meth

It has become a recurring theme each legislative session: the Indiana General Assembly passes new laws designed to stop the production and use of the drug meth.

The 2005 session was no different, as we restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines and other products that contain ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, two ingredients used to make meth.

When this law takes effect on July 1, most stores will be required to keep the drugs in a locked case or behind a counter. In addition, customers will be limited to three grams—about 100 tablets—of the medicines per week. To make a purchase, they will have to show a state or federal ID and sign a logbook.

This legislation is patterned after an Oklahoma law that has helped result in an 80-percent reduction in meth labs found in that state.

Meth is extremely dangerous because it can be made inexpensively using chemicals that are easy to purchase, produces a high that lasts longer than cocaine and causes delusions and psychotic behavior. Since many of the ingredients are highly dangerous, producing meth raises the risk of explosions and contamination.

“This legislation is patterned after a...law that resulted in an 80% reduction in meth labs...”

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